

How can **European possessive perfects** and a non-canonical **ergative marker** in a **Chibchan** language be related?

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Questions

BRIBRI, CHIBCHAN (Costa Rica, around 10.000 speakers) – **STRUCTURAL FEATURES**:
-ergative-absolutive alignment, entirely suffixing verb morphology with optional indexation of S/O
-OV and flexible position of ergative phrase. S/O is unmarked (NPs and Pr) and A is marked (NPs and Pr)
-**CANONICAL ERGATIVE MARKER**: **tō** (or its variants *dor* or *r*)
-**NON CANONICAL ERGATIVE MARKER**: **wã** (i.e. marker of the A argument limited to some constructions): perfective negative, extrinsic possession, transitivized verb of motion, deponent verb and **ANTERIOR (=PERFECT)** construction. It is now spreading to the perfective affirmative domain.
DIACHRONICALLY, WHERE DOES THIS ERGATIVE MARKER COME FROM?
WHY IS IT FOUND IN THESE CONSTRUCTIONS? IS IT THE SAME FOUND IN RELATED CHIBCHAN LANGUAGES (I.E. CABÉCAR)?

Methods

Syntactic reconstruction – Course in Hystorical Syntax taught at University of Oregon by Professor Spike Gildea (Spring 2013). Typological readings on the processes grammaticalization (reanalysis, extension/analogy and borrowing) and on the origins of ergative, inverse and accusative systems.

THE RISE OF POSSESSIVE PERFECTS IN SAE (adapted from Heine and Kuteva 2006) Contact-induced grammatical transfer constrained by structural similarity (**Marked areal clustering**)

Stage 0: possession schema <i>I have a book</i> <i>I have a written book</i>	Possessive <i>have</i> but no perfect (SR, Lithuanian, Finnish, Welsh). Possible ambiguity between possessive and stative interpretation. This stage is <u>bi-clausal</u> .
Stage 1 [<i>I have [a book written]</i>] becomes [<i>I have a book written</i>] (<i>I wrote it</i>)	Monoclausal. Ex-possessor and Agent of PPP verb are co-referential = resultative interpretation. Only TR verbs. PPP agrees with P. <i>Have</i> interpreted as auxiliary. (Serbian, Bulgarian, Ukranian)
Stage 2 <i>I have written</i> (a book), <i>I have run</i>	Possessive interpretation no longer possible. V can be INTR. PPP loses agreeing morphology with P argument.
Stage 3: Past time schema	Fully consolidated pattern. Agents can be non-human. (Romance, Germanic, Western Macedonian).

Results

BRIBRI'S INNOVATION OF A NEW ERGATIVE MARKER FROM A POSSESSOR MARKER

Stage 0 → **Possession schema** (Extrinsic Possessor marked by *wã*)

le' wã krò tso'
3SG POSS rooster EXIST
'He has a rooster'

Stage 0 + advanced: Possessor and Agent are co-referential and **VTR** is used in the construction:

le' wã krò tso' sú-ule
3SG POSS rooster EXIST see.PRF.ACTV-ACT.PP
'He has a rooster seen'

Stages 1/2 → **Past time schema**: auxiliary is dropped. **VTR** and **VINTR** are used

le' wã krò sú-ule
3SG ERG rooster see.PRF.ACTV-ACT.PP
'He has seen a rooster'

ONLY A (NOT S) IS MARKED →

le' kapé-ule
3SG sleep.PRF.ACTV-ACT.PP
'He has slept'

Some conclusions

CASE SYNCHRETISM: the possessor and one of the available ergative markers are formally identical (less frequent than instrumental-ergative case synchretism) (Palancar 2002), in fact, one comes from the other.
DIFFERENTIAL ERGATIVE CASE-MARKING (not allomorphic) not common across languages (McGregor 2009). + **QUESTIONS**: did this ergative marker spread to other constructions? Or are the *wã(s)* in other constructions just formally identical?

References

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